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ABSTRACT

The seven articles in this journal issue focus on the evaluation of reading programs at the elementary and secondary school levels. The articles contain (1) guidelines for evaluating reading materials, (2) a checklist designed to provide a broad overview of a school reading program, (3) an interview with Wayne Otto concerning techniques for evaluating reading programs, (4) a list of publications designed to keep parents informed about reading instruction, (5) a criticism of programs designed to prepare all children to read at the same grade level, (6) a list of questions to be asked by teachers when evaluating a classroom reading program, and (7) a rating scale for evaluating secondary school reading programs. (FL)

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WISCONSIN STATE READING ASSOCIATION JOURNAL

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WISCONSIN STATE READING ASSOCIATION JOURNAL

Volume 25, Number 4, May 1981

Theme: *Evaluating Reading Programs*

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Front Cover by Bonnie Murley

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Colleagues,

As the baton of leadership is passed to the new officers, one runner already in high gear must be singled out for his extraordinary accomplishments - Douglas Vance. Doug was there when my several illnesses necessitated his assuming the duties of president. Doug also moved the ***WSRA*** Spring Conference to a new high of excellence and service to our ever increasing membership. I have publicly stated my high regard for his outstanding assistance at the close of our recent ***WSRA*** Spring Conference. I do so again in print. Thank you, Douglas Vance, for a job well done.

At the recent Twenty-Sixth Annual Delegates Assembly of the IRA in New Orleans, Louisiana, the delegates assembled reviewed and discussed a number of important resolutions which provide the direction in which the International Reading Association should move.

The Association President, Dr. Olive S. Niles, also gave the "Report of the President" to the Assembly. She cited six major goals for 1980-81 which in summary are:

Goal 1 *To maintain momentum in the international development of the Association.*
Dr. Niles cited at least nine areas related to international development and gave IRA a grade of "A" on this goal.

Goal 2 *To reverse completely the decline in membership brought on by the dues increase.*
Our president reported membership up by .34% for the first three quarters of the fiscal year. Only 1.43% of the instructional staff in the United States belong to IRA. I was frankly amazed by this low percentage. Goal efforts were given a "B" grade. We all could help promote IRA membership, not for the sake of membership alone, but for what professional affiliation can do for children.

Goal 3 *To take positive positions on controversial issues.*
Dr. Niles reported that the Association is becoming more active and listed some seven items related to this goal. A grade of "A" was given to this item.

Goal 4 *To monitor the basic skills/competency testing movement..*
Goal 3 is related to this goal and a great deal of discussion and other activities have taken place in local, state and regional IRA meetings. Dr. Niles gave an "A" grade to this goal.

Goal 5 *To promote in our meetings and publications the teaching of reading in middle and secondary schools.*
The New Orleans Conference devoted a number of sessions to some aspects of reading for older students. Interest in secondary reading education seems to be growing. While

this may be true, Dr. Niles felt that a great deal more needs to be accomplished in this area and rated this goal a "B".

Goal 6 *To work with other professional groups/associations in promoting our mutual interests.*

Dr. Niles listed samples of IRA cooperation with other organizations such as the **Center for the Book of the Library of Congress, American Association of School Administrators, National PTA Organization, National Council on Accreditation of Teacher Education,** and the **National Joint Council on Learning Disabilities.** Dr. Niles gave this goal an unquestioned "A".

This set of goals gives you a good idea of the scope of IRA activities this past year. As our state organization, local councils, and individual members complete this school year and look **FORWARD** to the 1981-82 challenge, let us set up our own goals and strive for "A's and B's."

A copy of Dr. Niles' complete report will be sent to you on request to my business address.

Professionally Yours,
Mel Yanow

FROM THE EDITOR

Time sure flies fast. It seems like only yesterday that I was getting the first issue ready for mailing. And here it is the last issue for the year. I hope that you have found the journal this year as enjoyable to read as it has been for me to edit.

I do need to thank so many people for their great help this year. I couldn't have had a better set of contributing editors. To Mildred Hoffman, Doug Vance, Russ Burgett, Judith Schaumberg, Ellen Ryan and Kathy Buss go my deepest gratitude. Their columns have been excellent.

Without my assistant editors — Walt Prentice, Melva Kleist, and Mildred Hoffman, this journal would never have reached the excellence that I feel it has. A sincere thank-you goes to all of them.

I would also like to thank Roger Quealy, Mel Yanow and all the officers and leaders in ***WSRA,*** and especially the members of the Publication Committee, for their support this year. They all helped to make my job easier. And an especial thanks goes to a very exceptional lady, Sue Jund. She has given, and hopefully will continue to give, more support than she will ever know. Because of her, I have been able to take all the things that can go wrong — and do — with a sense of humor.

But even in this last issue for the year, I am looking forward to next year. Our new themes are printed on the inside back cover with manuscript deadlines. We will be focusing on **Study Skills** in the first issue, and on **Reading and Children's Literature, Developing Reading Comprehension,** and **Reading in the Content Areas** in later issues. Please take time to think over the themes and turn some of your thoughts into an article or two. If you have an article in mind on another subject, send it in. While each issue centers around a theme, articles on other topics are also included. As I travel around the state and meet teachers and administrators, I find a wealth of creative ideas and stimulating thoughts that should be shared with other educators. I hope to receive articles from even more of you in the future.

I also look forward to receiving your comments on the journal itself. The Publication Committee and I are always looking for ways to improve the journal.

Have a restful summer.

SOME GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATING READING MATERIALS

Robert Kann
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Madison, Wisconsin

Teachers often evaluate reading materials on the basis of readability, organization and format, durability, and cost. While these criteria are important, there are two other factors which are often overlooked in evaluating reading materials: **the content of the materials and the affective experience of the students as they are reading.** The content of the materials can influence students emerging value systems. Students' attitudes toward learning in general, and reading in particular, are largely fashioned through their experiences deciphering curriculum materials. The evaluation of reading programs should include analyses of both the values promoted in the materials and the phenomenon of reading experienced by students. Following is a list of twenty questions which serve as guidelines for assessing the content of the materials themselves, and for critiquing the materials from the reader's vantage point.

THE READER'S EXPERIENCE

1. How would it feel to go through Program X every school day for six years or more?
2. Which elements of the materials might frustrate the reader?
3. How do the materials build the reader's attitudes toward reading, both immediately and in the long-run?
4. Are the materials inherently interesting to the reader(s)?

BALANCE AND CONTENT

Do the materials:

5. present accurate representations of the subject matter (is it a fair representation of history, science, etc.)?
6. have any sexual, racial, class, or religious biases?
7. present women, minorities (racial, cultural, religious), and people with physical disabilities and other handicapping conditions in a wide range of occupational and social situations?
8. depict a variety of life-styles: single-parent families, interracial marriages, adoptions, etc.?
9. present a realistic and fair view of people of all ages and socio-economic classes?
10. present intergroup and interpersonal conflicts, and if so, fairly and objectively?
11. What kinds of experiences which are familiar to the students are not included in the content of the reading materials?

LEARNING

12. What attitudes are students learning from the materials?

Do the materials:

13. suggest that there is only one correct solution to problems?
14. encourage creative thinking?

15. help promote further interest in reading—interest which will extend way beyond the reader's experiences while attending school?
16. help foster a teaching-learning environment which is conducive to the development of positive attitudes toward reading?
17. encourage the reader to actively interact with the materials—to engage in a dialogue with the author(s)?

ALTERNATIVES TO MATERIALS

18. Are there better ways of getting at the core of the lesson than by using the particular set of materials?
19. Can the materials be used in different ways?
20. Can pieces of the materials be used independently from the rest of the program?

Teachers who consider these issues while evaluating reading materials will make better judgements on selecting materials that will promote positive reading behaviors in their students.

WORLD CONGRESS INFORMATION

The dates for the World Congress in Dublin have been set for July 27-29, 1982. From the response compiled at the state reading convention, there is a great interest in attending the congress. A tour to the Congress will be arranged by AAA World Wide Travel in Eau Claire. To arrange the best itinerary your suggestions are needed. The tour will depart from the U.S. during the 3rd week of July. Prices listed below are approximate. They include round trip air from the U.S., first class hotels, sightseeing and several meals. Please fill out the following form and return it to: AAA World Wide Travel, 2131 Brackett Ave., Eau Claire, WI. 54701.

Departure City:

Minneapolis ☐

Chicago ☐

Countries to Visit:

Ireland - 12 days
approximate cost **$1,700** ☐

Ireland/Great Britain - 17 days
approximate cost **$2,000** ☐

Ireland/Great Britain/Scandinavia - 24 days
approximate cost **$2,900** ☐

SCHOOL READING PROGRAM EVALUATION CHECKLIST

Edie L. Whitfield
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Kent Freeland
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Effective on-going evaluation is an essential part of a good reading program. Such a program involves more than just attention to a basal reader. It demands evaluation of the total school involvement:

1. **the reading program itself**
2. **the participation of administrators and supervising staff**
3. **the teaching staff**
4. **students**
5. **parents**

The following checklist is designed to provide a broad overview of the school reading program. It will identify needs, pinpoint weakness and serve as a springboard for reading program improvement. The more times **yes** is checked the closer a school is toward an optimum reading program.

The Reading Program	Yes	No
1. Are goals for the reading program clearly stated?		
2. Is it a K-12 sequential program where skills of one level are built upon skills of the previous level?		
3. Are components of a good reading program included?		
A. Assessment		
B. Diagnosis		
C. Readiness		
D. Language development		
E. Word recognition and word attack skills (phonics, word structure, context clues, dictionary skills)		
F. Comprehension		
G. Study skills Dictionary skills Research skills Library skills		
H. Literature		
I. Independent reading (silent reading)		

	Yes	No
4. Are adequate materials available to supplement basal reading instruction texts?		
A. Learning Centers		
B. Games, puzzles, task cards		
C. Supplementary readers, newspapers, trade books		
D. Puppets, stages, reader's theater, etc.		
E. Student workbooks		
5. Are reading enjoyment and motivation being instilled?		
6. Are the following types of reading instruction being provided?		
A. Basal reading (for children reading on grade level)		
B. Developmental (for children reading below grade level)		
C. Enrichment or acceleration (for children reading above grade level)		
D. Individualized procedures (for every child)		
7. Is the program being continually evaluated?		
8. Is reading regarded as a skill rather than a subject?		
The Administrative and Supervisory Staff	**Administrative and Supervisory Staff**	
1. Are school leaders knowledgeable about reading instruction?		
2. Do they encourage an atmosphere conducive to learning?		
3. Do they provide time and personnel for staff development?		
4. Are the necessary basic instructional materials made available?		
5. Are supplementary materials provided?		
6. Do they encourage and support educational experimentation and innovation?		
7. Are teachers consulted before new programs are instituted or changes made?		
A. Individualized reading		
B. Basal reading series		
C. Ability grouping		
D. Parent involvement		
8. Is teacher creativity encouraged?		
9. Is time provided for teacher observation and visitation?		
10. Is there a professional reading library for teachers?		
The Teaching Staff	**Teaching Staff**	
1. Are helpful teachers' editions available?		
2. Are teachers well qualified?		
3. Are teachers receptive to change?		
4. Are teachers receptive to offers of professional growth?		
5. Are efforts being made to improve teachers' techniques and methods?		
A. Staff development programs		

	Yes	No
B. Conferences		
C. Recommended readings		
D. Demonstrations		
E. Peer Observation		
6. Are efforts made to personalize instructions? (Are pupils reading at their own level and proceeding at their own rate of progress?)		
7. Do grouping procedures remain flexible?		
8. Are reading skills taught with a variety of materials in addition to basal readers?		
9. Is the library a part of the reading program?		
10. Are plans well developed and characterized by both long and short range goals?		
11. Do teachers take advantage of community resources to enrich teaching?		
12. Are teachers of the content areas informed about reading instruction?		
A. Reading problems in content subject, e.g., technical vocabulary, summarizing, adapting content to children's experiences, etc.		
B. Introducing new textbooks to children		
C. Accommodating both poor and excellent readers		
D. Comprehending charts, tables, graphs, maps, and illustrations		
The Students	**Students**	
1. Are students able to read (on their level) independently?		
2. Are students able to make application of reading skills to tasks in content areas? Do children know how to use reading to get information?		
3. Do students recognize reading as a 5-step process?		
A. Word perception		
B. Comprehension		
C. Analysis and questioning		
D. Integration of ideas		
E. Evaluation		
4. Is evaluation of reading skills an on-going process?		
A. Teacher observation		
B. Standardized reading tests		
C. Informal reading inventories		
D. Diagnostic teaching and re-testing		
5. Are students given opportunities to report on books?		
A. Written		
B. Oral		
C. Dramatization		
D. Sharing time		
E. Discussion		

Yes	No
Parents	

6. Do students have positive attitudes toward the teacher?
7. Do students treat books and supplementary reading materials with respect?

The Parents

1. Are parents aware of the school's philosophy of reading instruction?
2. Are parents provided opportunities for participation in various phases of the reading program?
   A. Book fairs
   B. Book clubs
   C. Puppet shows
   D. Sharing
   E. Tutoring
   F. Parent Volunteer
3. Are parents happy with the reading program?
4. Are contemplated changes and new programs presented to them?
5. Are parents aware of ways of contributing to readiness for beginning reading? (Is there a school plan to inform parents of prerequisites for reading achievement?)
6. Are parents given opportunities to express opinions and make recommendations?
7. Are parents aware of the importance of being readers themselves?

INTERNATIONAL READING ASSOCIATION

for educators concerned about reading

A non-profit association of over 60,000 members, IRA has programs designed to meet the needs of every educator involved in reading instruction. For more information on membership, publications, conventions, conferences, and councils write IRA, 800 Barksdale Road, P.O. Box 8139, Newark, DE 19711, USA.

EVALUATING READING PROGRAMS: AN INTERVIEW

Wayne Otto is a professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He is also a member of the associated faculty of the Wisconsin Research and Development Center for Individualized Schooling, where he and Sandy White recently hosted a conference on the topic ***Understanding Expository Text.*** *The conference was part of a project which aims to develop better understanding of how students comprehend content area textbooks and related print materials. A collection of the papers and reactions to the papers presented at the conference will be published by* **Academic Press** *sometime next year. Dr. Otto has published numerous articles in professional journals on various aspects of reading. He is the author of* ***Corrective and Remedial Teaching, 3rd Edition*** *(with Richard Smith), 1980; and* ***The School Reading Program: A Handbook for Teachers, Supervisors, and Specialists*** *(with Richard Smith and Lee Hansen), 1978, both published by Houghton Mifflin. Special thanks go to Wayne Otto for sharing his ideas with us. And again our gratitude goes to Walt for conducting the interview.*

Very often school systems evaluate their reading programs by using standardized test scores only. Do you think that is enough?

I don't. Looking at standardized test scores is kind of like trying to infer what the iceberg looks like by looking at the tip. What we have to keep in mind is that assessment has to be thought of as a behavior sampling process, and consequently we need to give more thought to what behaviors we want to sample, rather than simply to the sampling itself. Too often standardized testing is like putting eggs in a testing basket without giving much thought to whether the eggs are good or bad. That reminds me of one of my favorite diatribes: we ought not to be asking "What test should I give?" but rather we should be asking **"What decisions are there to be made?"** Then, having asked the more important question, we could begin to think more seriously about the behaviors we're trying to sample, or needing to sample, and think about what kinds of tests would be relevant if indeed testing was going to lead us to some kind of sensible intervention and improved instruction. Once we had done that we could start looking at specific tests and considering the adequacy of those tests. With such a procedure we probably would select better tests—and probably fewer of them.

Your logic is persuasive. . .

You know what should be done. . . There is a common sense approach that would be useful. Fortunately, it has already been described. It's the **CIPP Model** that Dan Stufflebeam and his associates have given some visibility to. CIPP stands for **C**ontext Evaluation, **I**nput Evaluation, **P**rocess Evaluation and **P**roduct Evaluation. Of course, most standardized testing is directed essentially toward Product Evaluation, toward the question of how well do people read after instruction. And evaluation effects haven't

paid a great deal of attention, virtually no attention whatever, to what the reading program was **meant** to be, what the program **turned out** to be, or what the ideal relationship of an *idealized* program and a real program might be in a real world sense. So we get back to what I said earlier, that standardized testing as a way of evaluating a reading program is only taking a look at the tip of the iceberg and not really considering that there's more of it **not** seen, or not even considered, than is considered. Standardized test scores aren't adequate and sometimes aren't even appropriate for trying to evaluate a reading program.

What criteria would you use to judge whether a reading program was successful?

My response to that question is to go back to the **CIPP Model.** If **sensible** evaluation is the goal, you have to start it right and you have to have planning that permits you to wind up where you want it to be. So good planning probably would involve a **CIPP**-type approach to where you are at a given point in time. May I elaborate a little on those **CIPP** bits?

Yes, please do.

OK. In **CIPP** planning, the context focus would be essentially coming to some locally acceptable definition of reading. I know that sounds kind of cornbally, but I've seen too many reading programs grow like Topsy without anyone ever having sat down to say what they really thought about reading and what role reading ought to be playing in the process of schooling and what the product ought to look like in the end. And I think that's why some really serious thought needs to be given to a definition in the first place. Once you have that, you can state some goals to establish further the context that you're going to be operating in. Then, with well established goals you can even state some instructional objectives. Note that I didn't say behavioral objectives! Also, in looking at context, one would look at problems, unmet needs, the kinds of things that already exist, and what resources are realistically available in a given situation. And probably as important as assessing unmet needs is noting what needs are, in fact, being met in the situation as it is. I think so often we forget that we **do** have a reading program whether we like it or not.

It's like the admonition to teachers to focus on individual strengths and not just weaknesses. We don't always do that in our own program evaluations.

Yes, I think that's exactly right. Sometimes some of the stuff we have isn't too bad.

*And all of this comes under **Context Evaluation**?*

That would have to do with context, yes. Input, then, would have to do with taking a good look at available resources and then getting an estimate of what resources would be needed in order to implement an ideal program,

and then striking some realistic compromises. I think most of us could "blue sky" or "buzz session" a beautiful, wonderful reading program that hardly anybody could fault and we'd know full well that, even as we were doing it, we wouldn't be able to pull it off because we wouldn't have a zillion dollars to spend on it. So I think we do need to imagine the ideal program, but we also have to be extremely realistic about what we can actually deliver and then try to strike the compromises that make it possible for us to have the best possible program. And that would be the input aspect of things. Balance, striking that balance. In planning you'd be trying to strike a balance and in evaluating you'd be trying to see whether, indeed, a viable balance had been struck. And then process evaluation. What's involved here is **monitoring** whatever it is that you planned in order to see whether, in fact, the plan is being implemented. I think one unfortunate thing that's happened to lots of programs is that the planning was done at one end and evaluation was done at the other end and nobody ever took a look to see whether, indeed, what had been planned had in fact been implemented. And so often babies have been thrown out with the bath water, as if the program had failed when it had never really been tried.

What was planned was criticized for not working when in fact it hadn't even been implemented?

Yes. A lot like Christianity, I suppose. We knock it a lot but it's never been tried.

Now that you mention it. . .

And process evaluation would also include taking a close look to see where curriculum and actual instruction might be out of phase, and then seeking balances to correct whatever gaps there are between plan and practice. And then, of course, product evaluation would include the usual tests - getting at the outcomes. But I think the important thing is that product evaluation really needs to be brought into focus in making certain that we evaluate the goals and objectives that we set for ourselves in the first place. And, you know, I see too little of that. Standardized tests usually are dreamed up by people who know nothing about local situations. And so we'll describe our program on the one hand and then go off and use the standardized test to evaluate it without ever looking to see that what we're evaluating is, in fact, what we had set out to try to get in the first place. That brings us back to the question of what criteria should be used to evaluate a reading program. I think the criteria that should be used are the criteria that are set in an application of the **CIPP** process. I'm not really answering the question definitively, I recognize that. But the point is that nobody from the outside can or should.

There's no one right set of criteria that need to be decided at the local level?

That's right. And if you don't have any goals, there's no point in trying to evaluate anything because you won't know if you've got it or not if

you don't know what you were looking for. It's kind of like walking around looking at the ground, finding something, and then deciding whether that was what you were looking for.

Do you see evidence that schools are using a model like **CIPP** *in evaluating their reading programs?*

There's some evidence of it in the kind of stipulations that the DPI in Wisconsin has put down as guidelines for developing and implementing a comprehensive reading program. So yes, I think there is evidence that such a model is being considered, whether the term **CIPP** is mentioned or whether Stufflebeam is cited or not. I think that model is implicitly there in the DPI's plan. Also, you know, in the theoretical literature I see a great deal more attention being paid to some of the preliminary planning that would set up a sensible evaluation.

And I assume that you would consider that a reading program that follows some kind of process like this would be a strong program, even if it wasn't consistent with your own biases about reading?

Yes, that's right. I think that's an important point. I think that a particular program should have its own biases and they should be out there. If it's meaningful and worthwhile to a local school district, that's what's important, not whether I like it or whether it fits any particular theoretical orientation.

That perspective is certainly far removed from putting all of our eggs in that standardized test basket. . .

Oh. yes. . . Which hasn't been very useful:

And it's really been sort of an easy way out of assessment. It sort of puts responsibility somewhere else.

That's right. Well, it's like a lot of educational research. It's kind of a cloud to protect us from doing any thinking.

Who are the most important staff personnel in developing an effective reading program?

I think pragmatically it turns out to be building principals. If you're going to have a total overall district reading program, you have to have some district level leadership and that might come in the person of a curriculum director, or whatever the specific title might be. But I think that as far as realistic implementation is concerned, a most important person is, in fact, the building principal. And if he doesn't know anything about reading, he's important at least in having enough sense to stand aside then and let somebody take over who does, for that particular aspect of a program. The

building principal is the person who can make room for program development and program implementation. So without him you're not going anyplace. And, of course, there's a need for some reasonable input from somebody who's knowledgeable about reading. And I mean "common sense knowledgeable" about it.

And that may or may not be the reading specialist.

That's right. As a matter of fact, sometimes I think the reading specialist tends to be off on some bias or some esoteric trip and might actually stand in the way. At least that's how things sometimes seem.

But somebody who has some good common sense feel for reading instruction is necessary. And I've seen classroom teachers who rise to the challenge very nicely.

Is it important to get as much of the staff involved as possible so that they feel they have a vested interest, a feeling of ownership?

That sense of ownership is absolutely important. I think what I'm saying essentially about the roles of the classroom teacher, or the reading specialist or somebody knowledgeable about reading, and the building principal is that you have to have an accepting climate for development and then you have to have participation of all the people who are going to be involved. I think probably if there is something that shoots down decent program implementation more often than not, it is having bypassed that ownership feeling. People who don't feel that they've really had a chance to participate in development can almost invariably see to it that nothing happens if they're inclined to.

I guess you include university people as being at least potentially knowledgeable about reading. Is there a way that university staff can have some input without threatening the whole climate?

I guess a sensible way would be to serve as resources. I think that too often we, and when I say "we" now, I mean we professor-types, have gone in and more or less told the people what their program should be. And that, I guess, hasn't been entirely our fault because usually that's why we're brought in. But anyway, if a university person can be first invited, to be sincerely invited, to be a resource person and then accept that resource role, we could be realistically helpful.

Anyone else who should be involved in the process of evaluating the reading program?

Well, to some extent I think parents. And I don't mean that you go out and ask parents what they think their reading program should be nor ask them even what reading should be taught. But parents need to have that feeling

of ownership too, although it's a different kind of ownership than the teachers'. I think they need to feel that the overall, long range goals of the reading program are sensible to them. It's probably asking too much to have parents sit down and say, "Well, these are what they are." But we can discuss with them the goals that we tentatively put down and get their input and modify the program in view of what they would really accept as the product that we're all seeking together.

Would parent input come mostly in the context evaluation component of the **CIPP** *model?*

I think so. I think too often that's where their input is neglected. What we lay on parents typically is a product evaluation. It says, "Ah, well, your 12th grade kid is reading at second grade level. Isn't that too bad?" Well, maybe it wouldn't be too bad if really the kid is extremely limited in his abilities and if that were all part of the master plan, that is, to get people to read as nearly as possible at their own personal capacity.

With future cutbacks in funding likely, what do you see as problems which may affect the effectiveness of a school's reading program?

I see potential cutbacks as not necessarily all evil. I think there's possibly some good news. The most negative thing I could see in the cutbacks is that people who are inclined to say that we should go with the single basal adoption would win the day. I think that would be the most significant step backwards that could possibly be taken. But I also see that, with limited resources, that mentality might indeed get more support. Optimistically, though, I see the possibility that with less funding there might be less testing. And I can't really say that would be a terrible loss. As a matter of fact, that might very well turn out to be one of the most significant steps forward we could possibly take. Because it might cause us, then, to think a little bit more about what it is we're **doing** rather that what it is we're **getting,** having done something we never understood. So that's one thing. And I think another possible positive outcome might be that with fewer funds available we might be inclined to buy less junk. I think that easy money has led lots of IMC's, or whatever you call that place, where you keep the stuff, to be overstocked with various pieces of hardware and lots of pieces of software that never got any thought as to whether or not the software, workbooks, kits, all that kind of stuff, really made any contribution whatsoever to a comprehensive program. I think maybe it would be better to have two bucks to spend and then spend them on something that was carefully conceived to meet clearly perceived needs, than it would be to have ten bucks to give a shot gun order to the first music man that comes to town.

Then, too, and I guess this can be good or bad, a decreased level of funding is likely to also cause there to be fewer support programs. On the one hand, that's bad; but, on the other hand, that could be good. It's bad if, indeed, severely disabled readers, kids who are physically handicapped, and

kids who are getting farther and farther behind in their development of reading ability can't be given the specialized, highly individualized help they need. There's a real danger that personnel cuts will have such an effect. On the other hand, if we don't have all the programs that typically have been called ***remedial*** available for dumping everybody who has a sniffle, that's not so bad. That might cause us to get a little bit more realistic about trying to work kids back into the mainstream of developmental instruction than we have been. So I think I have mixed feelings about the budget cuts.

I choose at the moment to be optimistic. I think we might move toward leaner and fitter reading programs than the ones we've had when they were kind of fat and frumpy.

Your comments have been thoughtful and thought-provoking. Do you have a "final word" for our readers?

Only that I think we do need to continue to be really sensitive to all the forces that makes us tend to fragment a program in the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages. We need to **resist** that tendency and to really make an attempt to develop coherent, all-school reading programs. If we can develop programs that have clear, long-term goals and rather specific instructional objectives that can be accepted by an entire school staff, then we'll have what we need to get on with some productive assessment.

Thank you very much, Wayne.

CORRECTION

The Parents and Reading Committee incorrectly identified the source of the 100 MINUTE CLUB program in their informational packet. This reading program was designed as part of the Kenosha Unified School District Program, Academic Improvement Through Language Experience. This is a National Institute of Education validated exemplary program and a part of the National Diffusion Network. The 100 MINUTE CLUB has been in use in the district for the past four years as one component of the Kenosha model.

SOME PUBLICATIONS TO KEEP PARENTS INFORMED ABOUT READING

Nicholas P. Criscuolo
New Haven Public Schools
New Haven, Conneticut

Trends and issues are constantly evolving in education and, more specifically, in the reading field. One cogent reason for this is that reading instruction is exciting and dynamic and one current trend in reading is parent involvement. Although it has been a long time in coming, more and more schools are involving parents. They are doing so in two concrete ways: **(1)** encouraging parents to work directly at school with children in need of individual reading assistance and **(2)** producing materials to be sent home which help parents reinforce important reading/communication skills in the home setting.

Parents often used to complain that the schools were not keeping them informed about the reading program or what they were doing to teach their children how to read. They were not aware of the methods and materials used by teachers in the reading program. Parents were under the mistaken impression that reading was taught through the use of a text and workbook. They had no idea of the rich, diversified and appealing materials used to supplement such a program.

Public relations programs launched recently by the schools have happily dispelled this and other myths spawned by both the print and electronic media. All of us have read newspaper accounts and viewed television programs about sagging SAT scores, school vandalism, etc. As recently as November, 1979, parents read articles, most notably the one by Rudolph Flesch in **Family Circle** entitled "Why Johnny **Still** Can't Read," which give parents the impression that the schools are producing a mass of illiterates. Involving parents is the key to combating such distortions and inaccurate information.

In addition to programs which involve parents, there are some excellent national publications e.g. newsletters, brochures, etc. which schools can encourage parents to subscribe to or purchase. These publications include:

1. **Parentcator**—Published by the National Forum of Catholic Parent Organizations, Suite 350, One DuPont Circle, Washington, D.C. 20036. Five issues for $7.00.
2. **Home Ideas For Reading**—Rider College, P.O. Box 6400, Lawrenceville, New Jersey 08648. Six issues per year for $4.00. Published by the New Jersey Reading Association.
3. **Partners In Education**—A series of 60 books which parents can purchase to reinforce skills in basic subjects. Published by Prentice-Hall Learning Systems, Inc., 1770 Technology Drive, San Jose, California 95110.
4. **News For Parents**—A newsletter issued three times per year to members of the International Reading Association. Published by the International Reading Association, 800 Barksdale Road, Newark, Delaware 19711.

5. **School and Family Digest**—P.O. Box 1127, Newark, Delaware 19711. Six issues for $5.00.

6. **Parent Brochures**—A series of brochures written especially for parents on such subjects as "How Can I Help My Child Read?", "Summer Reading Is Important," etc. Can be purchased at nominal cost from the International Reading Association, 800 Barksdale Road, Newark, Delaware 19711.

These publications for parents have been carefully selected and described briefly in this article. They will not only further the understanding of parents concerning the reading program but also foster a strong home-school partnership, both of which are extremely worthwhile goals for any reading program.

References

Flesch, Rudolph. "Why Johnny **Still** Can't Read" **Family Circle,** December 11, 1979: 26, 43-46.

ALL CHILDREN CANNOT BE AVERAGE READERS

Mary Jett-Simpson
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Again the notion has come into vogue that appropriate direct instruction will bring readers who are reading below average, according to national norms, up to grade level. This is reflected in a recent resolution by a school board of a large metropolitan city that "each school and classroom teacher be provided with supervision and training so that all students can reach grade-level achievement in all subject areas." The words "**all** students can reach **grade-level achievement**" instantly doom the school board, reading teachers, classroom teachers, and most important, a percent of the children to failure. Translated into everyday language, what the resolution says is that every child will be average. Is it possible for **all** children to be average—to read at grade-level achievement? In a word - NO!

Why not? To answer the question, it is necessary to understand grade level achievement. Fourth grade reading level achievement, for example, is usually defined as the average score of a large group of fourth graders on a reading test. Tests are given to fourth graders in various locations throughout the United States from representative ethnic and economic groups. This comparison group is called the norm group.

All fourth grade children in the norm group do not obtain the same score on the reading test. There are a small percentage of low and high scores and a large percentage of average scores. The score in the middle is the grade level achievement or average score. Reading tests are specifically designed through this process of standardization to obtain this result.

Children vary in their ability to read as people vary in their ability to bowl or play golf. Regardless of the skill of the bowling or golf instructor, it is not possible to have everyone performing at average. Even if the low bowlers and golfers get better there will still be an average. Averages change as performance changes. Tests are restandardized every few years for this reason. For example, the average score on a standardized test in the 1950's is not the average today because more than half of the students now read better than that score. Therefore, new harder tests were designed and new averages were established.

To answer the question, "How well are a school district's children doing in reading in comparison with children across the U.S.?" the children are given the same standardized test. Children who score at the mid-point are said to read at grade level achievement. Those who have higher or lower scores are said to have above or below grade level achievement. The point is **that there will always be children who score in the middle as well as above and below it.**

A second question can be asked about the reading performance of children in a big city or other children representing a special population. "How well are the children doing in comparison with other school districts like ours?" There are special norms which allow districts who differ from the national norm group to make this second comparison which may be more revealing than the first. It is more appropriate to compare school districts that are alike than different. A district could be doing better than one like itself but not doing as well as the national norms. Certainly, that is progress for that school district.

A basal reader also represents an average. A fourth grade basal is designed for children who are reading like average fourth graders. Since a fourth grade in a school district contains more than average children there will also be children who are reading from basals at higher and lower levels.

The goal of good reading instruction is to provide children with materials that will challenge but not frustrate—materials that would be too difficult to read alone but can be read successfully with good direct instruction. Therefore, a fourth grade child who begins the year reading at second grade level achievement and advances to third is succeeding. So is the classroom teacher, even though the child did not reach fourth grade level achievement that year. It would be unfair to say, by resolution, that there was no success.

Children are different. They do not all grow and learn at the same rate and to the same ability. To say that they do by resolution, ignores reality. Yes, we want to do better by our children and yes, we can do better. Providing the key person in reading instruction, the classroom teacher, with training, support, assistance, and good materials is a positive step in that direction.

STATE COORDINATOR'S MESSAGE

Dr. Roger Quealy
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire
Eau Claire, Wisconsin

Next year may well be the most difficult and challenging year in the history of Wisconsin education for reading teachers and their students. We will all be attempting to do more with less. Perhaps the most serious single problem will be the cutback in Title moneys and/or positions. As a member of the International Legislative Committee I have been involved in some of the decisions recommended by the new administration. **IRA** national leadership has done a superb job in preventing the cuts from being even deeper than they have been. I continue to urge each of our twenty councils, their officers and members, to communicate with our state and national representatives. The **WSRA** Legislative Committee has worked hard but they need your support. I invite you to write or to call me or to contact the chairperson of the **WSRA** Legislative Committee on any legislative concerns that you may have.

To maintain Chapter 29 through the next biennium will be a very difficult task. Much has been written in the **WSRA** Journal about our law. I know your officers will continue to expend their energies, time, and talents in doing everything that is necessary to hold our law in place.

By the time you read this our 26th Annual **IRA** Convention will have concluded in New Orleans. Remember that our National Meeting will be held in Chicago next year. I am sure many of you will be able to make it for the 27th **IRA** Convention.

The next World Congress is in Ireland July 27-29, 1982. We are currently soliciting interest in joining us on a **WSRA** World Congress Tour. Please check the information elsewhere in this Journal.

I hope to visit several local councils next academic year once again. If I can be of service to you in representing **IRA** or **WSRA** I would be happy to do so. In the meantime best wishes in closing out another academic year spent in the service of children in the Wisconsin Schools.

RESEARCH UPDATE: RESEARCH IN WISCONSIN

Doug Vance
Madison East High School
Madison, Wisconsin

In this issue I would like to share the work of the **WSRA Research Committee.** *This summer the* **WSRA** *will hold an open competition for a research grant. (See following grant proposal). The purpose is to encourage research having practical classroom implications for the teaching of reading. It is our intention that this will be an annual award with the next one being awarded at the Spring Conference in March.*

The inclusion of the following list of recent research papers by Wisconsin graduate students in reading in this article is intended to encourage the sharing of research throughout the state. Again, we would like to see this become an annual publication to inform our membership.

FIRST ANNUAL WSRA RESEARCH AWARD

The WSRA Research Committee will award $200 to the best proposal for research having practical classroom implication for the teaching of reading. The money might be used for things such as buying computer time, sending out mailing, or hiring help with the design. Submit a proposal no longer than four pages maximum which outlines what you propose to do. In your proposal include the following:

1. **Names and address of researchers.**
2. **Statement of purpose.**
3. **Hypothesis or research question.**
4. **A brief background of other research that has been done in the area.**
5. **Statement of how research will be accomplished. (Who subjects will be, school where research is to be conducted, etc.)**
6. **Practical classroom application of the study.**
7. **Budget for the research.**

Submit five copies to Dr. Anne Wolf, 154 Brewer Hall, UW-Eau Claire, Eau Claire, Wisconsin 54701.
Deadline: June 30, 1981
Award to be made by September 1, 1981.

RECENT RESEARCH PAPERS BY WISCONSIN GRADUATE STUDENTS IN READING

A list of masters and doctoral papers
completed on Wisconsin college and university campuses
since June 1979

Prepared by
The Research Committee of the Wisconsin
State Reading Association
March, 1981

The following includes lists of masters and doctoral papers which have been completed at four Wisconsin colleges or universities since June 1979. The **WSRA** Research Committee decided to collect and publish these lists to publicize the many studies which have been completed around the state. It is our hope that **WSRA** members can use these lists in several ways: (1) to identify potentially useful information; (2) to get ideas for research; and (3) to make contact with other Wisconsin researchers who are interested in the same topics.

The list is organized alphabetically by campus. We have included the information as it came to us from our "informants" around the state. In all cases, the papers are available through the school's library.

The basic purpose of the **WSRA** Research Committee is to encourage the sharing of research. This list is just one approach we have taken for reaching this goal. We would very much appreciate any other suggestions you have for facilitating communication about research among **WSRA** members.

The Research Committee would like to thank the following individuals who helped us put this information together: Robert Pavlick, Cardinal Stritch College; Bob McKeag, University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh; Tom Barrett, Ken Dublin, Dale Johnson, Wayne Otto, and Dick Smith, University of Wisconsin-Madison; and Jane Greenewald and Dave Gustafson, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse.

We hope that this information is useful to you. Please feel free to duplicate it if you wish.

Members of the **WSRA** Research Committee are:
Gary Bates, University of Wisconsin-Madison; Mary Sue Dillingofski, Scott-Foresman; Lorraine Gerhart, Brookfield Public Schools; M. Jane Greenewald, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse; Anne E. Wolf, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire.

CAMPUS: Cardinal Stritch College
CONTACT: Robert A. Pavlik
PAPERS AVAILABLE FROM: Sister Colette Zirbes, Interlibrary Loan
or
Sister Mary Albert, Materials Librarian for the Reading Department

AUTHOR	TITLE	DATE	KIND OF PAPER
Boyance, Ellen Jo	An Investigation Into Portrayal of the Black in Adolescent Literature	1979	Masters
Gauss-Harper, Fredrika	The Correlation Between Birth Order, Family Size and Reading Achievement	1979	Masters
Heffelfinger, Mark L.	A Study of Reading and Intelligence Scores of Students and a Survey of the Training Experience, and Attitudes of These Students' Teachers	1979	Masters
Higgins, Janet	The Relationship of Oral Language Instruction to the Language Arts Curriculum in Grade Five	1979	Masters
Koepke, Mary A.	An Annotated Bibliography of Reading Materials for Farm Children	1979	Masters
Kominiarek, Katharyn	An Examination of Auditory Discrimination and the Reading Process	1979	Masters
Kopp, Betty	The Problems and Remedies of the Functional Adult Illiterate in the United States	1979	Masters
Meier, Mary Jo	The Role of the Reading Aide in Grades One and Two	1979	Masters
Moews, Nancy	Adult Literacy: An Overview and Specific Programs	1979	Masters
Powers, Kathleen	Bibliotherapy as an Aid in Understanding and Helping the Physically Handicapped Child Who is Mainstreamed in the Elementary Classroom	1979	Masters
Shears, Thomas R.	The Necessity of Established Positive Interpersonal Relations Between the Staff and the Reading Resource Teacher	1979	Masters
Slawnikowski, Kathleen	The Point 31 Reading Program —Can It Be Used Effectively With Secondary Mentally Retarded Students?	1979	Masters
Wysocki, Susan	Integrating Reading and Study Skills With Language Arts and Social Studies (Grades 7 and 8)	1979	Masters
Ballstreri, Francis E.	A Psycholinguistic Understanding of Reading and Its Applicatin to High School Reading Programs	1980	Masters
Bender, Kathleen	A Review of Literature Pertaining to the Nature and Nurture of the Gifted Child	1980	Masters
Ganser, Gary R.	A Remedial Reading Program of Short-Range Objectives for Students in Grades One Through Four	1980	Masters
Goldstein, Diana	The Affects of School Entrance Age and Sex Differences on Reading Achievement at the End of Grade Three	1980	Masters
Henn-Reinke, Kathryn	Detecting and Remediating Syntactic Problems in Bilingual Children	1980	Masters
Krol, Carol	Language Arts Enrichment Activities for Gifted Students in Grade Five	1980	Masters
Tempe, Melinda	Representation of the Aged in a Sample of Popular Fiction Books For Children	1980	Masters

CAMPUS: University of Wisconsin-La Crosse
CONTACT: Dr. Robert Gowiland
Dr. M. J. Greenewald
Dr. David J. Gustafson
PAPERS AVAILABLE FROM: Library, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse

AUTHOR	TITLE	DATE	KIND OF PAPER
Colburn, Maureen	Survey of Junior High School Students' Reading Interests		Masters
Daellenbach, Constance	Perceptions of Kindergarten Teachers and Parents Regarding Necessary Prereading Skills		Masters
Foegen, Janice	Survey of Opinions of the Parents and Teachers in the St. Michael's Elementary School of Wausau, Wisconsin, Concerning the Evaluation of the Reporting Methods and the Reading Program		Masters
Fuchs, Cathryn	A Survey of Attitudes of Educators Within the La Crosse Public School District Concerning Single Basal Reader Approaches vs. Multi Basal Reader Approaches in the Teaching of Reading		Masters
Hagen, Mary	A Survey of Kindergarten and First Grade Teachers Concerning the Importance of Prereading Skills		Masters
Henry, Meryle M.	The Relevancy, Diagnosis, and Enhancement of Self-Concept: A Review of the Literature, 1965 to 1980.	1980	Masters
Henthorne, Joan	A Study of the Attitudes and Practices of Selected Content Area Teachers Concerning Reading Instruction		Masters
Jost, Susan	A Study of the Passage Dependency of the Comprehension Questions on the **Gates MacGinitie Reading Tests**		Masters
Knorr, Pamela	A Survey of Student and Teacher Attitudes Concerning Student Involvement in Decision-Making Affecting Curriculum Planning, Class room Learning Activities, and Classroom Management		Masters
McMullin, Nancy	A Library Study Concerning the Identification, Assessment, and Possible Reading Program for the Gifted Child in the Primary Grades		Masters
Murray, Karen M.	A Study of Reading Information Reaching Secondary Science Teachers Through Professional Science Education Journals		Masters
Nutter, Eliz	A Study of Selected Literature (1970-1979) on the Hyperactive Child		Masters
Opperman, Kathy	A Survey of Holmen Elementary Teachers' Preferences for Inservice in the Teaching of Reading		Masters
Post, Ritamae D.	Reading Resource Center Activities	1980	Masters
Twesme, Kim	The Effects of Terminology, Content Area, and Reading Course Work on the Attitudes of Secondary Teachers Toward Reading Instruction in the Content Classroom	1980	Masters

CAMPUS: University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh
CONTACT: Dr. Robert McKeag
PAPERS AVAILABLE FROM: Polk Library, University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh

AUTHOR	TITLE	DATE	KIND OF PAPER
Schrimshire, Barbara A.	A Wisconsin School District's Approach to Migrant Education	12/80	Masters

CAMPUS: University of Wisconsin-Madison
CONTACTS: Dr. Thomas Barrett
Dr. Kenneth Dulin
Dr. Dale Johnson
Dr. Wayne Otto
Dr. Richard Smith
PAPERS AVAILABLE FROM: Memorial Library, University of Wisconsin-Madison

AUTHOR	TITLE	DATE	KIND OF PAPER
Anderson, Christine	Meeting Gifted Children's Reading Needs Through Critical and Creative Activities		Masters
Anklam, Marleen	An Integrated Language Approach to Humanistic Reading Instruction		Masters
Budenz, Janice	An Investigation of the Relative Merits of the Language Experience and Ginn 360, Level 2, Approaches to Beginning Reading Instruction		Masters
Bush, Judy	College-age Readers' Affective Response to Male and Female Ethnically-linked Character Names in Fictional Reading Materials		Masters
Coventry, Sara	Two Methods of Vocabulary Instruction: A Comparison		Masters
Dymond, Judith	The Influence of Three Levels of Language — Formal, Informal and Substandard — on College Students' Perception of Literary Characters		Masters
Edds, Virginia	Reading Specialists' Views of Their Pre-Service Training, Job Responsibilities and Satisfactions		Masters
Engstrom, Mary	Strategies for Teaching Reading Comprehension Based on a Psycholinguistic Theory of Reading		Masters
Hartl, Susan	The Relationship Between Reader Interest and Comprehension		Masters
Hinze, Roxanne	Developing Questioning Techniques with Children		Masters
Jonjak, Stanley	A Theoretical Analysis of Metaphorical Language Use; An Empirical Analysis of High School Readers' Responses to What Literary and Everyday Symbols "Stand For"		Masters
Kock, Russell	The Importance of Three Contectual Devices in the Middle Grades in Determining Word Identification		Masters
Kramer, Clifford	Asthma and Learning: The Educational Problems Faced by Asthmatic Children		Masters
Krueger, Colleen	The Effects of the Molecular and Holistic Approaches to Reading on Reading Achievement Test Scores and on a Reading Attitude Measure		Masters
McCarthy, Loretta	A Platform for Debate: Informal and Standardized Testing		Masters

Murphy, Mary	Anaphora: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Research and Theory		Masters
Natalle, Carl	Ninth Grade Readers' Perceptions of Story Character Gender in First Person Stories Related to Their Interest in Those Stories		Masters
Novak, Esther	The Language Arts Helper for the Small Seventh-day Adventist Schools		Masters
Prokop, Mary	The Use of Comic Literature in School Programs		Masters
Prudhon, Carol	Effectiveness of Smith Model for Reading Instruction on Vocabulary, Comprehension, and Attitude		Masters
Quah, May Ling	An Investigation of the Relationships Between Poor Reading/Learning Achievement, Certain Learner Characteristics and School and Home Environment		Masters
Reid, Evelyn	The Impact of Race in Reading Materials and Its Affect on Children's Comprehension		Masters
Schulz, Polly	Determining Whether Students Stereotype Ethnically When They Read		Masters
Springstead, Jeri	The Effect of No Introduction, Audio-Visual Introduction and Dictionary Use on Students' Comprehension of German Reading Selections		Masters
Steffens, Elizabeth	Background and History of Education for the Gifted With an Emphasis on Reading Selections		Masters
Sweeney, Susan	Using Music-Related Reading Activities to Improve the Oral Reading Fluency of Second and Third Grade Poor Readers		Masters
Walz-Chojnacki, Mary	The Effects of a Self-Control Program and a Problem-Solving Program on the Study Habits, Study Attitudes and Grade-Point-Averages of College Students		Masters
Westmas, Marilyn	A Proposal for Establishing a Collaborative Teacher Center in Rural Communities		Masters
Wiesner, Barbara	The Effectiveness of Illustrations in Picture Dictionaries in Helping Students Locate Needed Words		Masters
Wresch, William	The Interrelationship of Reading and Writing Skills at the College Level		Masters
Allan, Karen Kuelthau	The Development of Young Children's Meta-linguistic Understanding of "Letter", "Word", and "Sentence"	12/79	Doctoral
Baumann, James	Effects of Heights of Information in The Content Structure and Measurement Mode on Third and Sixth Graders' Comprehension of Expository Discourse	5/80	Doctoral
Cureton, M. Deborah	Differential Processing of Explicit and Implicit Information by Skilled and Difference Fourth Grade Readers	5/80	Doctoral
Dillingofski, Mary Sue	The Effects of Imposed and Induced Visual Imagery Strategies on Ninth Grade Difference-Poor Readers' Literal Comprehension of Concrete and Abstract Prose	5/80	Doctoral
Hagen, Joan	The Effects of Selected Pre-Reading Vocabulary Building Activities on Literal Comprehension Vocabulary/Understanding, and Attitude of Fourth and Fifth Grade Students with Reading Problems	12/79	Doctoral

Harper, Betty	The Construction of an Instrument to Measure Elementary Teachers' Knowledge of a Subskills Approach to Teaching Reading	8/79	Doctoral
Johnson, Linda	The Effects of Word Frequency, Sentence Length and Sentence Structure on the Readability of Two College Textbook Passages	5/80	Doctoral
Lincoln, Nancy	An Investigation of First and Second Graders' Knowledge of Orthographic Structures in Relation to Reading Ability	5/80	Doctoral
McHugh, Linda	Consistency in Diagnosing Reading Problems and Prescribing Remedial Programs Among Reading Specialists, Learning Disabilities Teachers, Title I Teachers and Fourth Grade Classroom Teachers	5/80	Doctoral
Mortensen, Eileen Johnson	A Comparison of Selected Language, Word-Attack, and Comprehension Skills of Native Spanish-Speaking Elementary Students in a Bilingual Program and Native Spanish-Speaking Elementary Students in a Monolingual Program	5/80	Doctoral
Stevenson, Jennifer	Effects of Explicit-Activated and Implicit-Activated Antecedents on Average Third and Eighth Grade Readers' Resolution of Anaphora	8/80	Doctoral

WSRA's ACTION COMMITTEE

The past fall the **Action Committee** was formed with the following focal points:

1. Work with the DPI to help implement Chapter 29.
2. Establish a network of reading teachers and specialists throughout the state.
3. Explore the idea of providing workshops or other forums for reading specialists to exchange ideas.

In October a questionaire was sent to all district reading specialists asking them to identify all reading personnel in their schools plus listing any concerns which they had about reading.

The response was overwhelming. The list of reading teachers and specialists is approaching the 1,000 mark. Our committee will be doing a spring mailing to all of these individuals asking them to specifically state if they wish to be part of this communication network and how we can best serve their needs.

Another project of the **Action Committee** will be to publish a resource directory for 316's and 317's listing their names, addresses and area of expertise.

If you wish to be included in the communication network, but for some reason our mailings have not reached you, please contact any committee member for assistance. The **Action Committee** members are Eunice Bethke, Lucy Belke, Pauli Bamlett, Sue Felan, Margaret Jensen, Nancy Klusman, Janet Muellner, and Carolyn Stoner, Chairperson.

RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS: EVALUATING CLASSROOM READING PORGRAMS

Kathleen Buss
University of Wisconsin-Superior
Superior, Wisconsin

School will soon be out for the summer and it's time for classroom teachers to grade those final tests, complete reading checklists, make recommendations for next year's placement in reading, and finally, to evaluate the classroom reading program.

When evaluating the classroom reading program, there are several major questions which should be addressed by the classroom teacher. Following is a list of questions which might be helpful.

1. **Were the methods used for teaching reading appropriate for the population?**

There are several methods available for teaching reading. If one approach isn't appropriate or doesn't match the child's instructional needs, the teacher has several options available. For example, if the basal reader program doesn't match the needs of a child or a group of children, the teacher can try the Language Experience Approach, the Linguistic Approach, or an Individualized Approach. The basic skills of reading, the word recognition and comprehension strategies, can be skillfully taught using any of these methods if the approach is appropriate.

2. **Were children instructed at their Instructional Reading Level?**

This is probably the most crucial question related to progress in reading in the classroom. Children will progress in reading if instruction is delivered at their Instructional Reading Level. There are three levels of performance in reading. The first level is the **Independent Reading Level.** At this level the child's performance in word recognition is 98% or better and comprehension is 90% or better. Material at this level can be read with ease and without instruction. The second level is the **Instructional Reading Level.** Word recognition is 95% accurate or better and comprehension is 75% or better. At this level, students can read with understanding when instruction is provided.

At the third level, the **Frustration Level,** word recognition is 90% or less and comprehension is 50% or less. Material at this level is too difficult for the child to read even when instruction is provided. If children are to progress in reading, they should be placed in reading materials at their **Instructional Reading Level** in the regular classroom.

3. **Were children cross-grouped for specific skill lessons?**

Children should be placed in reading groups at their Instructional Reading Level and then regrouped for the specific skill lessons. For instance, six children in the classroom may have difficulty sequencing the events of a story. These six children can be grouped and instructed on sequencing

events while the other children practice on skills which they have not yet mastered.

4. **Is placement in reading flexible?**

Children progress at different rates; therefore, there should be provisions made by the classroom teacher for those children whose performance surpasses their reading group's or for those children whose progress falls behind the group's. There should be policies in the classroom for continually assessing individual student's growth and for restructuring the reading groups to accommodate individual rates of learning.

5. **Were diagnostic procedures adequate?**

The diagnostic procedures used in the classroom should supply the information needed to determine individual children's placement in reading and also identify strengths and weaknesses in the skill areas. Informal reading inventories and informal teacher-made tests should provide the information needed for placement and ongoing assessment. Assessment of reading progress should be a continuous process throughout the year in the regular classroom.

6. **Are the record keeping techniques informative and efficient?**

Individual records should be kept on each child's achievement in reading. Teachers should devise a system of records that identifies placement, growth, and areas of strengths and weaknesses. Teacher-made checklists can be very informative to the school personnel as well as to parents and should be available for each child.

7. **Was reading for enjoyment encouraged in the classroom?**

Teachers spend a lot of time and energy teaching reading, yet do they allow time in the classroom to practice these reading skills by allowing and even encouraging reading for enjoyment? Teachers should provide time during the regular school day for **all** children just to **read.** What a perfect way to practice all those skills that have been so skillfully taught. A time and a place should be alloted for children to read and to share trade books.

8. **Were parents informed about their child's performance in reading?**

Parents have a right and a need to understand the child's placement and progress in reading. Newsletters, individual notes, telephone calls, or parent-conferences are all ways that teachers can notify parents about their child's performance in reading. Parents should be informed periodically about their child's progress by the teacher and suggestions should be offered on ways to encourage reading at home.

(Continued on Page 44)

EVALUATING SECONDARY READING PROGRAMS

Russ Burgett
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Many persons are involved in and have responsibilities related to the **teaching of reading** in the secondary school. Thus when a program is evaluated, it needs to include all, or as many as possible, of those participants who have a vested interest in the program. These include the superintendent, the principal, content area teachers, supervisors, librarians, aides, parents, and students.

Program success is usually determined by student reading achievement. However, it should also include an assessment of student attitudes toward reading, affective as well as motivational. If student achievement is less than anticipated, then programmatic aspects need to be investigated. At this point it is necessary to evaluate the responsibilities of as many of the reading program participants as possible. A modification of a rating scale, like the one which follows by Aaron (1976, pps. 561-562), could be utilized for that purpose and customized to fit a specific school's program.

RATING SCALE FOR EVALUATING RESPONSIBILITIES IN READING INSTRUCTION

Directions: Selected responsibilities of the teacher, principal, superintendent, reading supervisor, and parent are listed below. By circling the appropriate number, indicate the extent to which a given teacher, principal, superintendent, reading supervisor, or parent reflects each characteristic or meets each responsibility. Use the following ratings:

1. Almost always
2. Most of the time
3. Sometimes
4. Seldom or never
5. Undecided
6. Not applicable in program

Teacher's responsibilities: The teacher

1.	Aims reading instruction toward the achievement of specific goals.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	Understands children and adolescents and uses knowledge and development in teaching reading.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	Adapts reading instruction to the individual levels, abilities, and needs of all learners.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4.	Uses diagnostic-prescriptive approach in reading instruction.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5.	Establishes a good working relationship with students.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6.	Merges materials and equipment into a total program.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7.	Knows the skills of reading and how to teach the skills.	1	2	3	4	5	6

3.	Leads students toward enjoyment of reading.	1 2 3 4 5 6
9.	Evaluates progress in reading in terms of instructional goals.	1 2 3 4 5 6
10.	Organizes the classroom for effective management of reading instruction.	1 2 3 4 5 6
11.	Keeps parents informed about the reading program and about individual progress of students.	1 2 3 4 5 6
	Principal's responsibilities: The principal	
12.	Converses knowledgeably with teachers and parents about the school's reading program and practices.	1 2 3 4 5 6
13.	Assists teachers in obtaining needed teaching materials.	1 2 3 4 5 6
14.	Takes the lead in planning necessary staff development for teachers.	1 2 3 4 5 6
15.	Taps all available resources for assistance for teachers.	1 2 3 4 5 6
16.	Encourages teachers to move toward excellence in reading instruction.	1 2 3 4 5 6
17.	Observes an atmosphere that encourages teachers to seek help.	1 2 3 4 5 6
18.	Identifies leaders among the teachers who will assist in coordinating efforts in reading.	1 2 3 4 5 6
19.	Recognizes the relationship of reading to the total curriculum and emphasizes reading in the school program.	1 2 3 4 5 6
	Content area teacher's responsibilities: The content area teacher	
20.	Teaches students to use developmental skills in that content area.	1 2 3 4 5 6
21.	Teaches the special reading skills of that content area.	1 2 3 4 5 6
22.	Continues to work toward the development of each student's reading-study skills.	1 2 3 4 5 6
	Reading supervisor's responsibilities: The reading supervisor	
23.	Assists in keeping teachers and principals abreast of new materials and new developments in the area of reading.	1 2 3 4 5 6
24.	Assists principals in planning and conducting staff development in the area of reading for teachers and aides.	1 2 3 4 5 6
25.	Prepares and works with leaders in each school who will in turn work with teachers.	1 2 3 4 5 6
26.	Assists the superintendent in motivating principals and teachers to move toward excellence in reading instruction.	1 2 3 4 5 6

27.	Assists the superintendent in motivating principals and teachers to try out new or different practices if they offer promise for improvement.	1	2	3	4	5	6
28.	Creates an atmosphere that encourages teachers and principals to seek help when needed.	1	2	3	4	5	6
29.	Observes instruction to locate "promising practices" and to assist in improving reading instruction.	1	2	3	4	5	6
30.	Provides leadership in evaluating the total reading program of the school and/or school system.	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Superintendent's responsibilities: The superintendent						
31.	Sees that adequate staff development for reading instruction is planned for system schools.	1	2	3	4	5	6
32.	Sees that all school personnel are motivated to move toward excellence in reading instruction.	1	2	3	4	5	6
33.	Sees that adequate personnel and materials for teaching reading effectively are available.	1	2	3	4	5	6
34.	Sees that persons involved in making systemwide decisions about reading are representative of the groups to be affected and are well qualified.	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Parents' responsibilities: The parents						
35.	Work toward building concept backgrounds and meaning vocbularies in their children.	1	2	3	4	5	6
36.	Encourage children to read.	1	2	3	4	5	6
37.	Read to children and develop a reading atmosphere in the home.	1	2	3	4	5	6
38.	Learn about the reading programs in the classrooms of their children.	1	2	3	4	5	6

All participants listed on the rating scale should take an active part in the evaluation of themselves as well as each other. The results are then used to identify new or continuing needs, to revise goals, and to redesign or modify existing program components.

References

Aaron, Ira E. Evaluation and Accountability. New Horizons in Reading. Newark, DE: International Reading Association, 1976.

REVIEWS

Judith B. Schaumberg
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Ciani, Alfred J., Editor. **Motivating Reluctant Readers.** Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association, 1981.

This compilation of ten articles originally presented at the I.R.A. Convention at Houston in 1978 is a worthwhile addition to a teacher's professional library. There are several, practical teaching suggestions included that warrant reading, reviewing, and rereading. Though, as the title states, the techniques are directed toward reluctant readers, many would be applicable to students who are avid readers.

The strategies presented are geared toward readers who can but **won't.** The case is made for motivation of these readers in Roger Farr's article, **Building Language Experiences for Reluctant Readers.** In it he states that "lack of interest may be the single greatest cause of failure to learn." The cyclical effect of a poor self concept resulting in a poor reader which leads to an even poorer self concept is explored in Bonnie Deeds', **Motivating Children to Read through Improved Self Concepts.** In these as well as the other eight articles, concrete strategies for use in the classroom are suggested.

The content teacher is the intended audience for four of the articles, though it may be necessary for the reading resource teacher to act as the intermediary in getting the information to them. The Farr article makes a very strong argument for the use of a thematic approach in the teaching of content subjects. His contention is that this approach will approximate individualization since various levels and interests can be accommodated through it. Farr believes that in "Using a thematic approach as the framework, a teacher can easily develop a variety of language experiences which will integrate the language arts and present them as purposeful activities, stimulate the interest of the reluctant reader, supply necessary background information, and provide opportunities for success."

Cyrus F. Smith Jr.'s article, **Motivating the Reluctant Reader through the Top Twenty,** has direct application to the English, art, and music classes. In his article, he proposes teaching reading skills through the use of popular song lyrics. The specific set of lessons used as an example within the article revolve around the song, "Vincent" by Don McLean.

An annotated bibliography of books of interest to adolescent readers is presented in Alfred J. Ciani's **Recent Adolescent Literature: An Alternative to the Serials.** His bibliography is grouped according to the following categories: Contemporary Fiction, Science Fiction, Sports, and Nonfiction.

The idea of using books to augment the curriculum and motivate the

learner is expanded in David M. Bishop's **Motivating Adolescent Readers via Starter Shelves in Content Area Classes.** Within the article, he suggests some practical techniques to develop the life-time reading habit by opening the content classroom to books. Bishop also includes a very extensive listing of sources for teachers interested in broadening their content beyond the textbook. Lists included are: Sources for Initial Selection; Sources for General Interest; Sources for Specific Content Areas: Art, Physical Education and Sports, Science, Social Studies, Vocational; and a list of Older Sources for General Interest.

The rest of the articles in the book are more directly related to the reading teacher and the reading consultant. Answers to the question parents so often ask reading teachers, "What can I do to help my child become a better reader?" are provided in John A. Childrey Jr.'s **Home Remedies for Reluctant Readers.** He proposes and thoroughly explains several steps parents can take on the path to creating a motivated reader.

The strategies developed in Betty R. Grant's **Using Student Publishers to Promote Book Sharing** and in Victoria Miller Waller's **Lights, Camera, Action: The Camera as a Tool for Teaching Reading** are such extensive projects that they would have to be developed in a reading rather than a content class. The Grant article advocates enhancing self concept and developing language skills through student-authored, student-published books. She includes a checklist for editing and binding that would be usable by teacher aides, volunteers, or older students to help in running the project. The Waller article attempts to "provide information on raising money to buy equipment, offer ideas for use of photos and slides in your classroom, and discuss some skills practiced while using cameras in the classroom." Many ideas are presented for display of photos and for their use in developing specific reading skills.

The last article **Reading Lab or Resource Room: What Service Can Be Provided?** by Connie Porter provides an effective closing for the book but is the least helpful for the inservice teacher. The ideas presented are too general to provide direct application to the school setting. The four phases of running a learning laboratory - diagnosis of problems, program planning, implementation, and evaluation - are discussed. Porter puts emphasis on flexibility of the learning lab teacher and of the total school and on administrative support for the program.

The book, **Motivating Reluctant Readers,** is highly recommended for use by middle, junior and high school teachers. Since the book is available through the International Reading Association, few content teachers will have direct access to it. Reading teachers and reading consultants who have this access will provide a service by making the book or specific parts of it available to dedicated, supportive content teachers. There is the danger, though, that reading people will be reluctant to share it with content people because it may make the rounds of the school and never be returned to them!

D.P.I. READING NEWSLINE: UPDATE

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In the January issue of the **WSRA** Journal, I asked the question: **What, considering the Reagan administration, is the future for education, especially reading?** Well, in Washington, D.C., on Capitol Hill there is still talk about disbanding the newly created Department of Education. T. E. Bell, head of the U.S. Department of Education, says he did not accept the executive cabinet position with any intention of working toward the Department's demise. What is of considerable importance to the field of reading, is that Dr. Bell was the former U.S.O.E. Commissioner of Media Service, in Washington, D.C., while the Department was encompassed in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Not only is it important that he knows his way around Washington, but Dr. Bell has a personal interest in the subject of reading and wrote the Right to Read mission statement that was developed to eradicate illiteracy.

However, in respect to money, whether it be federal, state, or local funds, the golden years for education are over. At all levels the competition for funding will be keen. Due to declining enrollments, there already have been drastic reductions in faculty and school personnel. Almost all programs will soon feel the effects of the scarcity of money. In Wisconsin we are well aware of Governor Dreyfus' proposed educational cuts this year (Senate Bill 10) and for the next biennium (Assembly Bill 66). In his budget message the Governor has also proposed the following regarding school district standards (Statute 121.02) and curriculum requirements (Statute 118.01).

School District Standards (Statute 121.02)

In the Governor's budget bill for the 1981-83 biennium (AB 66), Governor Dreyfus has proposed lifting selected state mandates previously placed upon public schools. As a consequence, the "Department of Public Instruction is directed to study effectiveness and impact on districts of its administrative rules which specify how local schools must meet state standards. Based upon this review, new rules are to be issued prior to the sunset of the present rules in June, 1983." (Budget in Brief, p. 45.)

It is also proposed in the budget that the categorical school aid program for driver education will no longer be funded from the Transportation Fund. This includes the local school district categorical driver's education aid and the DPI administration. The Governor's budget bill does not provide for any appropriations. In effect, this could eliminate the DPI program for instructor training and the DPI consultant services.

Curriculum Requirements (118.01)

In addition, the budget proposal suggests the repeal of all components of 118.01 (2-11) with the exception of the fundamentals. Such subject areas in the curriculum would include physiology and hygiene, physical education, prevention of accidents, morals, animal life, fire prevention, cooperatives, conservation, citizenship and family and consumer education. The repeal of 118.01 (2-11) touches very closely to our own K-12 Developmental Reading Law, Chapter 29, Statute 118.015. The seriousness of these proposed cuts demands that each of us become politically attuned to the consequences of such action.

Please keep me informed of your personal questions and shared concerns so that we can remain united to meet the educational needs of the students we serve. Should you want to contact me regarding any educational issues, please write or call:

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9. **Was evaluation of the reading program a continuous process throughout the year?**

To provide for optimum success in reading, evaluation of the reading program should be a continuous process. As teachers are teaching and assessing children's progress in reading, they should also be reviewing the relevance and effectiveness of the goals, objectives, and materials in relation to the children's growth in the program.

Teachers, before you close your doors for the summer, you should evaluate your classroom reading program. Decide, HOW, WHEN, and BY WHAT MEANS you can improve or restructure your classroom reading program to meet the needs of the children next Fall.